

County Council Report for October 2012

New contract for home and community-based services

A tendering exercise for home and community support based services has recently been completed. The new contract began on 1 November 2012. We sought to reduce the number of providers in order to work more closely with successful organisations, improving quality – whilst also saving taxpayers' money. Following a rigorous evaluation process the County Council will be awarding contracts to 6 Strategic Providers and 28 Preferred Providers. The contract duration will be for 5 years with an option to extend for a further 2 years. The competitive process will save money for the local authority as providers were asked to submit their most competitive rate, taking into account the travel and other costs of operating in different areas.

Some existing providers were unsuccessful in the tendering exercise. Some of these will not be transferring staff to the new providers, as they have a large number of self-funders or are planning to use these staff on other areas of work. Where providers have been unsuccessful, people who want to stay with those providers can do so by choosing to take a Direct Payment. Locality Teams will undertake appropriate work with those people wanting to take a Direct Payment to ensure that they are able to manage a Direct Payment or identify a nominated third party, such as a relative, to manage the Direct Payment on their behalf.

The Social Fund

On April 1 next year the Department for Work and Pensions will transfer responsibility for administering aspects of the Social Fund to Cambridgeshire. The Social Fund is a crisis scheme. It provides fast, short-term assistance to people in crisis. The Cambridge Public Service Board and our Adult Social Care team are currently preparing a consultation with districts and other interested parties to establish the best way to implement the Social Fund locally.

Older People's Day Services Modernisation

The Older People's Day Service Project was established to deliver a modernised service which focuses on personalisation and community support. The broad vision is of a three tiered approach to the provision of day services comprising: intensive support (tier 3), community hubs (tier 2) and universal services (tier1). The model recognises the value of day services to service users and their carers, whilst at the same time seeking to make more effective use of resources by reducing inefficient block contracts, sharing resources with other services and focussing on the value of community support and prevention. The project is progressing well and the outcomes for all day services operated by Cambridgeshire Community Services have now been determined.

Child Protection OfSTED Inspection Report and Improvement Plan

An OfSTED Inspection of Arrangements for the Protection of Children in Cambridgeshire took place in September. Cambridgeshire was one of the first authorities nationally to be inspected under the new framework which has a different scope and methodology to previous OfSTED inspections of Children's Services.

The inspection was carried out primarily through the scrutiny of casework and practice. This was achieved through a combination of team visits, case meeting observations, case tracking sessions with practitioners and the scrutiny of electronic case records by inspectors. In total approximately 200 cases in social care and early intervention services were looked at. The inspection team also conducted focus groups, 1 to 1 interviews and reviewed documentary evidence supplied by the authority.

The findings:

The inspection judgement was that the overall effectiveness of Cambridgeshire's arrangements for the protection of children was inadequate. The detailed grading in each judgement area within the Ofsted framework was:

- Quality of Practice - inadequate
- Effectiveness of Practice - inadequate
- Leadership and Governance – adequate
- Overall Effectiveness - inadequate

The inspection report highlights a great many strengths in practice in early help and preventative services and in many key areas of social work practice. The report recognises the improvements that are taking place in Children's Social Care through the Social Work: Working for Families change programme and the introduction of the Unit Model. However the report also highlights some weaknesses in respect of practice and recording. Practice concerns in respect of a former temporary team, which had been identified and actioned by senior managers, nevertheless strongly influenced the inspectors' views.

Overall, the inspectors found that the quality of social work practice was too variable, including examples of poor casework, child protection visits not always taking place on a timely basis and some child protection plans not being clear or well focussed. Section 47 child protection investigations were considered to be too variable and did not always involve all relevant agencies. The quality of initial and core assessments was also considered to be too variable.

The quality of case recording was a consistent theme raised by inspectors. Poor case recording meant that work was not always properly evidenced and made it difficult for inspectors to evidence that the voice of the child has been heard and to be able to see the clear basis on which decisions had been made in casework.

The inspectors assessed the leadership and governance of services as being adequate. The Council's ambitious leadership was acknowledged, reflecting the Social Work: Working for Families transformation programme and the "determination to change traditional social work practice through the implementation of social work units". The inspectors noted the investment that was being made in staff. Senior managers were considered to have a good understanding of the strengths and areas of development of services and changed was described as being well led with staff morale being high. Performance management arrangements were found to be firmly in place. However, the impact of some of these arrangements was questioned given the findings of the inspection in respect of the variability of practice.

Next steps:

The Cabinet endorsed the Improvement Plan developed by CYPS and the progress made on the key five areas which requires immediate action.

The improvement plan includes a range of focussed actions to improve the Council's arrangements for the protection of children. However, the Council is also rolling out a major transformation through the Social Work: Working for Families programme. The programme was started nearly two years ago in recognition of the need to make substantial improvements in social work practice, the inspection noted the scale of the ambition that the programme represents. It also records the improvements that the inspectors identified as being delivered through the programme.

The inspectors noted the improved responses to need that the social work units were making, the good standard of unit meetings, the clinician role was described as providing a valuable additional perspective and the systemic approach that has been introduced was seen as providing a strong focus on the child and family. Inspectors also stated that “Action to implement the new systemic model of social work practice has already had an impact. Nearly all of the most recent children in need meetings, assessments and plans include the views of parents and children leading to improved outcomes for children. This programme is a key element of the Council’s improvement journey, and both the inspection report and comments from Cabinet were supportive of the direction of travel. An Improvement Board has been established to oversee the delivery of the improvement plan. It held its first meeting in shadow form on the 3 October to commission the immediate actions, and the first formal meeting to report on progress was held on October 24th. The final membership of the Board will be discussed with the Department for Education as a part of the Department’s work with authorities with an “inadequate” assessment. Re-inspection will take place within the next 12 months.

Key Stage 2 Results

Key Stage 2 results show marked improvement this year, with the proportion of pupils achieving level 4 or higher in English (85%) rising by three percentage points; the proportion achieving level 4 or higher in Maths (83%) rising by 3ppt; the proportion achieving level 4 or higher in both English and Maths (79%) rising by 5ppt and rises in the proportion of pupils making expected progress in English (6ppt to 88%) and in Maths (5ppt to 86%).

Cambridgeshire has gained ground on its statistical neighbour group in both the English and Maths progression measures and in the percentage of pupils achieving Level 4 or higher in the Science Teacher Assessment. However, Cambridgeshire has lost ground for the proportion of pupils achieving Level 4 or higher in Key Stage 2 English and in English and Maths combined.

Key Stage 1 Results

A proportion of pupils achieving L2+ in Reading and in Writing improved, both by 2 percentage points to 88% and 84% respectively, with a 1ppt rise in Maths to 91%. In all three subjects boy’s performance improved at a faster rate than that of girls. Cambridgeshire performance improved at the same rate as national performance in Reading, Writing and in Maths but gained ground on its statistical neighbours in both Reading and Maths – the improvement in Writing was in-line with that across Cambridgeshire’s statistical neighbours.

Transfer of Budget for Custodial Remands – Youth Support Services

The Youth Justice Board will be transferring the budget for custodial remands – about £115k annually - to the County Council from April 2013. This will create new risks and opportunities for the Youth Offending Service and the County Council budget:

- Avoiding cases which enter remand from a non-youth (Adult Magistrate or Special) court and then come out again at their first appearance at a Youth Court. This will be managed by ensuring that duty staff produces immediate and effective bail placement options. We will need to work with Social Care and partners on responsiveness to issues and the quality of placements to be offered.
- We will need to ensure that the budget can be carried forward through financial years so that ‘good’ years can subsidise the bad. It is generally accepted that in the event of a young person being tried in the Crown Court on manslaughter, rape, murder case, the budget will be hit very hard. Provision will be made for high cost cases by accessing the agency placement budget if all of the devolved budget is used.

Together for Families

A significant programme of change is underway within Cambridgeshire to support earlier identification of families with a range of needs. This is already leading to more effective joint working and a better understanding of the cost effectiveness of the services provided. There is an opportunity to capitalise on the Government's current investment in Troubled Families to accelerate change within Cambridgeshire. We are therefore building on our existing model for working with families to enhance prevention and early intervention – Together for Families. Full details will be provided in the first Together for Families newsletter which will be distributed shortly. The Children's Trust Network has held a conference with the key topic on the Together for Families Programme. Its keynote speaker will be the National lead on the Troubled Families agenda, Louise Casey.

Corporate Parenting Strategy

The Corporate Parenting Strategy was presented to Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 19 September, at which there was acknowledgement of the importance of corporate parenting and the important role for members in promoting Corporate Parenting across the County Council and in the community. Members were asked to put themselves forward to undertake key corporate parenting roles for which they will receive training and support from officers. Cabinet endorsed the strategy on 23 October 2012.

Fostering

A large number of Cambridgeshire's foster carers have received long service awards in recognition of their work with the county's looked after children and young people. Around 150 carers, children and members of staff attended the popular event and a total of 17 families received awards this year, with the longest serving carers celebrating 35 years of fostering. In presenting the awards Councillor John Powley, Chairman of Cambridgeshire County Council, said "I cannot overstate the importance of the work foster carers do, or how grateful we are to them. Fostering is a fulfilling, demanding, and skilful role. Our foster carers are highly valued by us, the County Council, but are valued most of all by the children in their care".

National Sons and Daughters week

During half term we are celebrating national Sons and Daughters week, an opportunity for us to say a big "thank you" to the children and young people whose parents are foster carers and Link carers. We have been supported by a number of organisations across Cambridgeshire who have offered either free or reduced rate activities to fostering families. Organisations include Cambridge United Football Team Huntingdon District Council leisure centres, Grafham Water, Crystal Country Play Barn, Fenstanton, National Trust – Anglesey Abbey, Ely Maltings Cinema, Oliver Cromwell's House, Ely.

Proposal to establish a new school on a former school site in Green End Road, East Chesterton, Cambridge

We are consulting on a proposal to re-use the former Shirley Lower School site in Green End Road, East Chesterton, Cambridge. In doing so, we are aware of the concerns of local residents adjacent to the Green End Road site, about its possible re-use. Concerns are mainly about traffic, parking and access-related issues.

An extensive consultation ran from the date of the Cabinet decision (17 September) and closed on 10 October 2012. A document outlining the proposals and inviting comments was circulated to 1600 individual residential addresses in the Green End Road area and to local parents through pre-school settings and Shirley Community Primary School. On the basis of the responses received following consultation on the proposal, Cabinet made recommendations on:

- the use of the site and buildings in Green End Road, East Chesterton, Cambridge to provide a 210 place primary school with early years and childcare provision from September 2013;
- the shortened timetable set out in paragraph 5.2.4 for seeking a sponsor of the new school as either a Free School or an Academy under the relevant provisions of the Education Act 2011; and
- further consultation with local residents on the preparation and implementation of appropriate traffic and parking restrictions in the surrounding residential area.

School Funding Reform

The consultation with Primary and Secondary schools ended on 8 October to take into account their concerns. The Schools Forum discussed these concerns before presenting findings to Cabinet with recommendation on 27 November. The Draft Primary and Secondary School budgets will be circulated in early November now the baseline funding estimates have been returned from the Education Funding Agency. An open letter from Cllr David Harty is going to Michael Gove MP outlining our concerns with the Funding Reform.

Connecting Cambridgeshire

The Connecting Cambridgeshire project is on track to achieve its aim of providing better broadband for all by 2015, with superfast broadband for at least 90% of premises across the county. The procurement process to select a supplier to deliver the broadband infrastructure is on track to conclude in December. Subject to EU State Aid approval and sign off, the roll-out plan will then follow in early 2013.

Demand registration is still rising with over 20,000 registrations, supported by more than 80 local Broadband Champions. The campaign is targeting parishes with low registration levels and poor broadband coverage in a final push to raise registrations and awareness of what better broadband will bring.

The Connecting Cambridgeshire project also embraces plans for Cambridge to be a super-connected city with ultrafast broadband speeds of 80-100 mbps and wireless connectivity to boost the local economy through technology, innovation and enterprise. We have submitted the 'Cambridge Super Connected City' plan ' to Department of Culture Media and Sport for a share of the £50 million Urban Broadband Fund, with the decision expected in early December.

Cambridgeshire Future Transport

A working group has been formed to explore transport options for the Linton-Balsham area. This follows joint working between Cambridgeshire County Council and local parish councils, and direct consultation with the community. In the Fulbourn area the interim solution is working well, and the villages will now explore funding options to match fund CCC spend to ensure long term viability.

Following work with the Whittlesford area group, options have been worked up and presented to parish councils, and these have also been discussed at a community meeting. A favoured option emerged from the community meeting and has been agreed by the parishes and we are finalizing the route. This has been very well received locally.

The team has now met with all South Cambridgeshire parishes involved in CFT. They were very positive about the process and have agreed to help in further engagement. Meetings have been held with East Cambridgeshire parishes that again will be helping with the engagement process. Initial meetings with community groups has begun and a working group put together to help develop options.

Local Strategy Development

A scoping paper was reported to the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Joint Member Group on 15 October which outlines the proposed approach, draft vision and objectives for a new Long Term Transport Strategy for the area. Members feedback is being sought and the expectation that a Draft Transport Strategy would be consulted upon summer 2013 alongside a Draft Non Statutory Strategic Spatial Framework.

The transport strategy for Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire consultation closed on 28 September. The consultation has been aligned with Cambridge City Council's and South Cambridgeshire Local Plan consultations. Initial results of the City Council Local Plan consultation have now been shared with us and officers will review them shortly. Modeling work is to commence with an assessment of Growth Options which will be reported to the Joint Member meeting which is to be held later in November.

There are no formal requirements for authorities to produce a single Joint plan for the wider area, however the authorities are working closely and aligning timetables for plan production to ensure integration and alignment on strategies. The local authorities have a duty to produce statutory plans guiding development in their areas, at the same time there is a duty to co-operate and all 3 authorities are working well together to plan in a holistic and integrated way.

Where possible and appropriate the 3 authorities will consult jointly on relevant issues. Our plan is to consult jointly (one report) in the spring on Assessment of growth options and further site options.

Cambridge Science Park Station

This proposed new train station has multiple benefits, including improved access to the railway network from the north side of the city, improved access to the key employment centres at the Science Park and other business parks on the northern fringe, direct interchange with the Busway, and opening up a significant area of land for economic development.

The design of the new station is being developed in partnership with Network Rail and the train operators. The public will be asked for their input to the emerging designs in November to allow a final design to be developed for submission of a planning application in the New Year.

There has been a Delay to the franchise process as the issuing of the invitation to tender for Thameslink due in October has been delayed for three months by the Department for Transport following the review of the West Coast Main Line tendering process. It is not anticipated that this delay will have any impact on the delivery of the station, as this is not critical to the programme.

A14

We have been working closely with the Department for Transport and local partners on the A14 study which has now been completed, and the final stage is due to be published imminently. Much work is still required to finalise the scheme, decide how it will be procured, by whom and what role the Local Authorities will play in its delivery.

We have initiated early discussions between Local Authorities and LEPs in the region to explore how far they can support the financing of the scheme from future revenue streams. Although we are in the early stages, some support is forthcoming and Government is clear that a local contribution is a necessary element of the package.

Funding

A package of pinch point funding from the Highways Agency has been announced for the East of England, totaling roughly £22m. £7m of this is proposed to be spent on improving the A14. Schemes must be capable of being completed by March 2015 in order to be eligible. Details of the local scheme is included below:

A14 junction 31 to 32 improvement, Cambridgeshire

Reduce congestion by widening the A14 between junctions 31 and 32, and installing three sign gantries across the width of the carriageway. This supports Northstowe Phase 1 development, as well as the gateways of Felixstowe and Harwich ports.

It also supports the outputs from the A14 Challenge study, providing early improvements consistent with the new A14 major improvement scheme announced by the Transport Secretary on 18 July 2012.

Flood Risk Asset Management Register

We have now completed Flood Asset Inspections in South Cambridgeshire District Council. A summary of the inspection report will be discussed with South Cambridgeshire District Council and covered in the progress report for next month. We have also recorded and reported assets in poor condition to the DC. Asset inspections will commence shortly in Cambridge City Council.

We are continuing to update our flood asset database and external register with data from ongoing inspections. The flood asset database is being developed further internally to enable us show photos of assets on the external register. However, we will continue to explore the option of developing an enhanced flood asset register in liaison with IT, GIS, Web Strategy and Highways teams.

We have consulted the Parish Councils to determine the degree of interest in helping us collect significant flood assets data. So far, a number of Parish Councils have expressed interest in this work. We are working closely with them to set up the protocols for progressing this.

Olympic Legacy

Work on Olympic Legacy work is coordinated by the GOLD Group. A meeting was held on 19 September to agree how each of the legacy areas would be progressed by the group. We are drawing together a sub group of GOLD to look at the future of volunteering in Cambridgeshire: an initial meeting due to be held with a report being drafted to be presented back to the GOLD group in early 2013.

Waste PFI

The continued suspension of the MBT facility remains following the structural failure in September 2012. AmeyCespa are currently undertaking a series of assessments to determine the cause of the failure and to put a contingency plan in place. The Council is expecting a full report to be submitted by AmeyCespa and officers are liaising with our lawyers in order to protect the residents of Cambridgeshire from the failure. All other parts of the facility remain fully operational as before and stakeholders and communities have been informed. Until we receive the detailed report from AmeyCespa and review its contents we are unable to determine the length of time the MBT facility will be out of action and any financial affects it might have upon the Council.

Reshaping of Supporting Businesses and Communities Service

The consultation document has been issued and 44 responses have been received and meetings have been held with many partners. As a result of the consultation the service design has been tweaked. The skills document has now been released.

Street Lighting PFI

A recovery plan is being carried out by the service provider to improve their overall performance in delivering the Core Investment Programme to bring our street lighting stock up to the required standards, together with the 10% overall reduction in stock needed. Particular emphasis is being placed upon improving the Service provider's consultation process undertaken with local Communities and their elected members. Previous issues raised from earlier works undertaken are being addressed by Officers and the Service provider.

New platform for www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk

A tender has gone out for the procurement of a new content management system which will host our corporate website. Although our current site has the highest rating of any council website in the country Microsoft will stop supporting the software it runs on. By replacing it with a new system we'll be better placed to support the transformation and digital agenda. The main considerations when evaluating the new product include how usable we can make the website, how we can deliver for mobiles and how we can reduce the cost of delivering web services and micro sites. We are scheduled to make a decision around a supplier in January.

Public Health Transition

Under the Health and Social Care Act 2012 Local Authorities will take over responsibility for Public Health from April 2013. This means that the County Council will be responsible for leading public health, working closely with District Councils, the NHS and other stakeholders.

By taking on this role the Council should be able to develop holistic solutions to health and wellbeing embracing the full range of local services (e.g. health, housing, leisure, planning, transport, children and young people's services and adult social care). These new public health responsibilities will be supported by a ring-fenced budget and the Director of Public Health will lead on this work, as the principal adviser on health to the Council.

Colleagues from NHS Cambridgeshire's Public Health Team have been located in Castle Court since April this year as part of a "shadow year" before the formal transfer next April. As part of our ambition to make the County Council a "Public Health" organisation all Cabinet Reports now contain a "Public Health Implications" section and staff from the Public Health Team will be attending Corporate Induction sessions between now and April 2013.

Information Asset Catalogue

A central information asset catalogue is being compiled across the organisation which lists all the key sets of information that support our work. This is a vital step towards managing all our information more effectively. To date over 250 assets have been identified and catalogued.

Electronic document and records management system (EDRM)

The EDRM system continues to roll out across the organisation which will help us better manage our information and records electronically to help staff work more effectively and to reduce storage space across the organisation. The current area to move onto the EDRM is HR and initial estimates of office space saved of transferring the paper records across totals 140m of office space.

Cromwell Museum

The Cromwell Museum in Huntingdon celebrated its 50th anniversary during the weekend of 19/20 October – the museum opened its doors for the first time on 19 October 1962. Celebrations included an anniversary party and author talk at Huntingdon Library, and civil war re-enactment display at the Museum.

Libraries, Archives and Information

Arts Council England has published their interim report on *Envisioning the library of the future*. Their findings suggest that 'Over the next ten years, the core *purpose* of libraries looks set to remain the same as it has been for many years: enabling people to access, explore and enjoy books, reading and other forms of knowledge, the provision of quality-assured information, support for learning and literacy. The critical difference in the future will be the social and technological context in which libraries will be working, and what that means for *delivering* their core purpose.' The research suggests that 'libraries will be directly relevant to the changes facing society over the next ten years. There is the potential for libraries to be at the centre of a new settlement between communities and the state, and to lead the way in the co-production of a much-valued public service.'

CAMDEX

A major project to transfer around two million family records to a new online system, and continue to make them freely available, has been completed in Cambridgeshire. The project means the information is now on-line on a much easier to use and more reliable system. It has been made possible thanks to a partnership agreement between Cambridgeshire County Council Registration Service and the Cambridgeshire Family History Society which has led to a new system being developed.

The free search facility, accessible through the County Council's website at www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/community/bmd/certificate, people can find details about their family tree and order certificates easily. It also allows people to apply for more recent entries on-line and apply for copies of their own family's records.

Customers often tell the County Council they want more information and services online to ease access to information, and this is a good example of what can be achieved through partnership working.

Public County Council meetings in November

16 Nov 9.00am **Cambridge City Council, South Cambridgeshire District Council and Cambridgeshire County Council Strategic Transport and Spatial Planning Group** Shire Hall or Guildhall, Cambridge - to be confirmed

20 Nov 2.00pm **Cambridgeshire Children's Trust** Huntingdon Library

21 Nov 2.30pm **Audit and Accounts Committee** Shire Hall, Cambridge CB3 0AP

22 Nov 10.00am **Local Government Shared Services Joint Committee** Grafham Water Centre, Perry, Huntingdon

27 Nov 10.00am **CABINET** Shire Hall, Cambridge CB3 0AP

28 Nov 10.30am **Joint Development Control Committee**: Cambridge Fringes The Guildhall, Cambridge

28 Nov 2.00pm **Northstowe Joint Development Control Committee** South Cambridgeshire Hall, Cambourne

For regular updates please see

http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/council/democracy/Calendar_of_Meetings.htm.